

(Crabapples cont'd.)

2. **Selection should also be based on disease resistance.** Apple scab is the most serious problem in the humid Great Lakes region. Fire blight is another serious disease problem. In my experience, fire blight can be fatal to these crabapples: *Malus baccata* "Columnaris", *Malus croonaria* and *ioensis* and their cultivars, *Malus* "Guiding Star", *Malus micromalus*, *Malus x scheideckeri* and its cultivar "Hilliere", *Malus* "Snowdrift", *Malus spectabilis* "Riversii" and "Van Eseltinei", *Malus tschonoskii*, *Malus yunnanensis* veitchii.

Though not fatal, I have also observed severe fire blight on the following: "Beverly", "Bob White", "Golden Hornet", *M. sieboldii* and *M. x zumi calocarpa*.

Cedar-apple rust contributes to the decline of *Malus coronaria* and *ioensis* anywhere within the natural range of red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*).

3. **There are no disease-resistant rose-pink flowered crabapples at the present time.**

4. **Most upright or columnar crabapples eventually suffer "middle-age spread."** Although upright in their branching habit as young plants, most increase dramatically in spread following the production of heavy fruit crops.

5. **Suckering from the rootstock is the most serious maintenance problem with crabs.** This is especially troublesome when the non-vigorous crabapples are grafted on-to vigorous seedling apple rootstocks. The practice of propagating crabapples on their own roots should minimize this problem.

Designing with Crabapples

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Crabapples comprise a major portion of the palette of plants used in the design of landscapes. Unfortunately their use often ends in the same predicament common to silver maples and junipers. Their inherent design characteristics are overlooked. Selection is made in haste, based only on the flowers of spring. Disregarded is the size, branching pattern, form and other features, as well as the location they will assume in the executed design. This quick choice is often the start of a landscape destined to failure and disappointment. The very basis for sound design is omitted — consideration of all the characteristics of the tree. Rather than a striking feature, it ends up as an incidental drooping in the landscape scene.

To understand the landscape potential of the beautiful and versatile crabapple, it is necessary to first understand the basic characteristics of the species. The following features should be carefully considered: buds, flowers, fruit, form, branching patterns, textures, foliage, winter effects.

As we use the list of characteristics just compiled, the landscape compositions will vary by application. The combinations are as varied as our capabilities. We see them used as contrasting forms, colors and textures to the forms of conifers and deciduous plants; blending with other buds, flowers and leaves; fruit colors extending through fall and winter; fall colors harmonizing with conifers and deciduous plants; and the beauty of a well-chosen specimen to add charm in a special place.

There it can display its form, elegant flowers, colorful fruit, autumn colors and artistic branching in uncrowded splendor,

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